

Adapted

Telecommunications

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2007



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Supplementary Planning Document - Telecommunications

As part of the Local Plan process, supplementary planning guidance was prepared to supplement policies and proposals in the Local Plan. The Borough Council consulted the public on the guidance at the draft deposit and revised draft deposit stages of the Local Plan preparation process. Some of the comments on the Draft Deposit Guidance were taken into account in formulating the Revised Draft Guidance.

It was not appropriate for the Borough Council to adopt the guidance as supplementary planning guidance because this can only supplement an adopted local plan and the Tamworth Local Plan 2001-2011 was not adopted until 2006. Furthermore, under the new development plan system, supplementary planning guidance has been replaced by supplementary planning documents.

This document was approved by the Borough Council's Cabinet on 25th July 2007. This is in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme that came into effect in March 2007.

Introduction

It is recognised that modern telecommunications are an essential element of modern life both locally and nationally and are vital for economic success. They can play a crucial role in helping to attract business to an area, and benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel.

Due to the vital input telecommunications have to modern life, there is considerable pressure for more telecommunications developments. Therefore, Tamworth Borough Council must reconcile the provision of such developments, plus the aim of securing the best possible service and widest possible choice, with the protection of the environment and the amenity of those living or working near to telecommunications installations.

The government's policy on telecommunications is to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunication systems whilst keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. In this respect the Government published in August 2001 Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications which sets out the Government's policy on telecommunications and the role of Local Planning Authorities and telecommunications operators in the delivery of an environmentally acceptable system.

PPG8 makes reference to the need for consultation and publicity, what environmental considerations should be taken into account, the siting of masts and the opportunities for sharing, the design issues for such facilities and health considerations. The guidance provides a comprehensive policy base which together with the Policy EMP8 forms the basis on which the Borough council will assess proposals for telecommunication developments.

The following local policy based on government advice was adopted in July 2006

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POLICY EMP8

Policy EMP8 of Tamworth Local Plan recognises the importance of additional telecommunications apparatus but seeks to minimise their impact.

Policy EMP8

The erection of new masts and antennae by telecommunications code system operators will be permitted where the following criteria are all met:-

- 1 The siting, height and appearance of the apparatus and any ancillary development has been designed to minimise adverse impact on the built and natural environment, without inhibiting operational efficiency;
- 2 It has been demonstrated that mast or site sharing is not a feasible alternative and that the apparatus cannot be sited on an existing building;
- 3 It has been demonstrated that an alternative, less environmentally harmful means of providing the same service is not feasible; and
- 4 The need to include additional structural capacity to take account of future demands for network development has been considered.

The following paragraphs give further details to this policy.



Siting

Sensitive areas

Planning permission and notifications will not normally be granted for the erection of telecommunication masts and associated equipment within environmentally sensitive areas. Environmentally sensitive areas shall include conservation areas, the setting and curtilage of listed buildings, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of County Biological Importance, sites supporting local and national Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, Green Belt or other major open space areas as identified on the Proposals Map.

Need

The erection of free-standing telecommunications masts shall be permitted if the operator has demonstrated through the submission of robust evidence that there is the need for the facility and has shown that there is no opportunity to site the development on another structure.

Mast sharing

The operator shall demonstrate through the submission of robust evidence that the feasibility of mast sharing has been fully explored prior to proposing new sites.

School premises

Proposed base stations on or near school premises or grounds shall not be acceptable unless paragraphs 54-61 of the Code of Best Practice have been adhered to.

Design

Minimise impact

The scale of the development shall be restricted to the minimum requirements necessary to operate and shall take advantage of the latest technological advances that would minimise the visual impact of the structure.

Sympathetic Design

Sympathetic design and camouflage is essential to minimise the impact of the development on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. This will be of paramount importance where facilities are located within residential premises. In such circumstances the apparatus should blend into the surrounding area in order to safeguard residential amenity.

Landscaping

To assist in minimising the impact of developments landscaping features, either existing or proposed, shall be used to reduce the visual impact of free-standing masts and equipment housing. Account will need to be taken of the boundaries of the development to accommodate suitable planting together with the type of planting having regard to seasonal changes such that the whole development blends into the surrounding area.

Colour

Telecommunications development shall be painted, in appropriate colours, to reduce the visual impact when necessary.

Health Considerations

All applications and notifications should be accompanied by a declaration that the equipment and installation is designed to be in full compliance with appropriate ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection) guidelines on public exposure.